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LAST YEAR WAS THIRD WARMEST ON RECORD: U.N. CLIMATE AGENCY

The planet logged its third hottest year on record in 2025, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said on Wednesday

AVERAGE TEMP 1.44°C ABOVE 1850-1900 FIGURES

The global average surface temperature in 2025 was 1.44°C above the 1850-1900 average, according to the WMO's analysis of eight datasets. Two of these datasets ranked 2025 as the second-warmest year in 176 years since 1850, and the other six ranked it as the third-warmest. In all eight datasets, 2023-2025 are the three warmest years on record

'THIS YEAR LIKELY TO BE FOURTH WARMEST'

- "The year 2025 started and ended with a cooling La Niña and yet it was still one of the warmest because of the accumulation of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in our atmosphere," WMO said
- Berkeley Earth, whose dataset was one of the eight analysed by the WMO, said 2026 would most likely be fourth-warmest year

14.97°C

WAS THE AVERAGE GLOBAL TEMPERATURE IN 2025

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

THREAT OF FAST TRIALS, EXECUTIONS

Despite Trump's threats of intervention, Iran's top judge hinted at fast trials and executions for those who were detained in the ongoing protests | P14

At least **2,571** people have been killed in the protests so far, claims US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency

As many as **18,434** individuals had been arrested in troubled Iran, as on Tuesday

97 cases of forced confessions broadcast so far

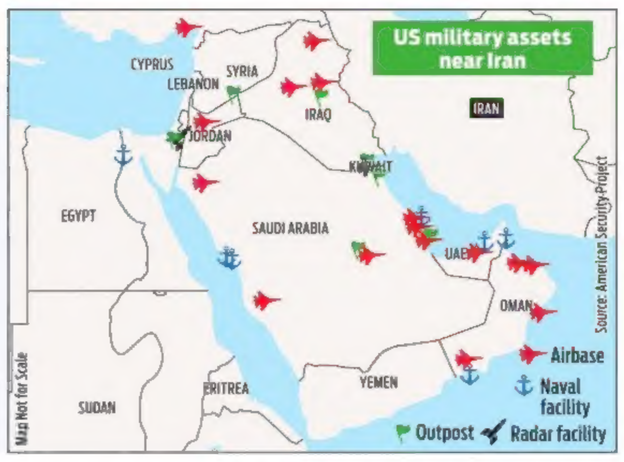
Over 1,100 protesters suffered severe injuries

Some personnel at US base in Qatar advised to evacuate

Dozens of Iranians crossed into Turkiye amid massive nationwide unrest

Ships drop anchor outside Iran port

Many commercial ships have dropped anchor at a distance outside Iran's port in recent days, according to a Reuters report



LEAVE IRAN, INDIA TELLS NATIONALS

Jaishankar speaks with Iranian counterpart Seyed Abbas Araghchi, reviews the evolving situation

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

THE Indian Embassy in Tehran on Wednesday advised all its nationals, including students, pilgrims, businesspersons and tourists, to leave Iran using available means, as the security situation in the country sharply deteriorated amid weeks of deadly protests.

Later in the day, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar spoke with his Iranian counterpart Seyed Abbas Araghchi, during which the two leaders reviewed the "evolving situation" in and around Iran. "Received a call from Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi. We discussed the evolving situation in and around Iran," Jaishankar wrote on X.

"All Indian nationals in Iran are requested to leave the country using available means," the embassy said, and added that citizens should keep their travel and immigration documents, including passports and IDs, readily accessible. "They are requested to contact the Indian Embassy for any assistance in this regard," it said.

The embassy reiterated that Indians and Persons of Indian Origin should exercise due caution, avoid areas where protests or demonstrations are underway, remain in contact with the embassy and closely monitor local media for developments.

The advisory comes as massive nationwide protests in Iran entered the 18th day, with demonstrations reported across nearly 280 locations. The unrest, which began over double-digit inflation and sharp currency devaluation, has escalated into violent clashes with security forces.

According to the US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency, at least 2,571 people have been killed in the protests so far. Iran has imposed a communications blackout in several areas and is facing mounting international pressure over its crackdown on demonstrators. Another NGO, Norway-based Iran Human Rights, put the verified toll at 3,428.

On Tuesday, US President Donald Trump publicly urged Iranian protesters to take over state institutions and not back down, claiming that "help is on the way," without providing further details. His remarks fuelled speculation over possible US involvement amid rising regional tensions.

In a related development, Reuters reported that several personnel were advised to vacate the Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, the largest US military base in West Asia, by Wednesday evening as a precautionary step. Similar measures were taken ahead of US air strikes on Iran in June last year.

The Indian embassy also urged nationals who have not yet registered with it to do so through its online portal, noting that family members in India may register on their behalf if internet disruptions prevent access within Iran. P11

SC hearing on ED plea against Mamata today

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court will on Thursday take up a plea by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) alleging obstruction of its search at I-PAC office by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. The state government has also filed a caveat in the SC, seeking that no order be passed without hearing it. A bench of justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and Vipul M Pancholi will hear the ED's plea.

In a related development, the Calcutta High Court on Wednesday closed a plea filed by the Trinamool Congress seeking protection of sensitive political data the ED may have seized from I-PAC. Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, appearing for ED, told the HC that the agency did not seize anything from I-PAC director Pratik Jain's office or home, adding it was Mamata who entered the search site and took away documents and electronic evidence.

In its plea before the SC, the ED sought directions for a CBI probe into the alleged interference by the state executive. The agency said the CM's presence and confrontational act had an intimidating effect on its officers. The petition was filed against the state of West Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, DGP Rajeev Kumar, Kolkata Police Commissioner Manoj Kumar Verma, and South Kolkata Dy Commissioner Priyabatra Roy.

West Bengal Police has also filed an FIR against ED officers over the January 8 I-PAC raids.

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'Garg refused life jacket, was heavily drunk'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Guwahati

MUSIC icon Zubeen Garg was "severely intoxicated", and he drowned near the Lazarus Island after refusing to wear a life jacket, a coroner's court in Singapore was told on Wednesday.

Testimonies reconfirmed reports that the singer went into the waters wearing a life jacket but removed it and then declined to wear a second one. Witnesses saw the severely intoxicated Garg trying to swim back to the yacht, but went limp and began floating face down.

The chief investigating officer told the court that Garg and 20 others on the yacht had snacks, drinks and alcohol.

A pair of Malabar pied hornbills at the Hornbill Conservation Reserve

Where are Dandeli's hornbills?

SUBHASH CHANDRA NS @ Dandeli (Uttara Kannada)

THERE was a time when the Dandeli forests used to reverberate with the calls of Great Hornbills. Declared as Hornbill Conservation Reserve in 2011, the 52.5 sq kms stretching from the Dandeli wood depot to all along the river Kali up to Ganeshgudi now see very few flocks of the spectacular birds with large, yellow beaks.

Many blame it on eco tourism and water sports gaining prominence along the river Kali and in and around Dandeli forests.

Hornbill Conservation Reserve within the Kali Tiger Reserve is home to four of India's nine species of hornbills—Great, Malabar Pied, Malabar Grey and Indian Grey.

Hornbills used to flock all along the Kali at Ambeli, Ilava, downstream of Supa Dam up to Bommanahalli backwaters. The birds were sighted in plenty until 2022, say local birdwatchers.

The post-Covid revival of tourism is a matter of great concern for wildlife lovers. "Water sports activities have increased over the last three years. The area has become noisy and the birds tend to avoid these places. It is clear that the birds have gone to new places," says Rahul Bavaji, a wildlife enthusiast. "There was a time when there were hornbills on almost all branches of trees. That has become a rare sight. These birds are prone to disturbances and tend to abandon the habitat," says another wildlife enthusiast. P7

EXPRESS READ

Seven-day joint session from Jan 22 on VB-G RAM G

Bengaluru: The state government will convene a seven-day joint session of the legislature between January 22 and 31 to exert pressure on the Union government to withdraw the VB-G RAM G Act and reintroduce MGNREGA. Initially, the state government had decided to call a special session, but due to technical reasons, a joint session has been convened | P4

30,000 NHM contract staff go without salary for 3 months

Bengaluru: Nearly 30,000 National Health Mission contractual employees in government hospitals in Karnataka are working without salary since October 2025. These employees are now struggling to meet their basic needs. However, Harsh Gupta, principal secretary, health department, said, "We are not aware of the issue" | P6

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